

## RELIGION AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA

DALJIT SINGH SADHARIA

INDIA, in contrast with the other nations of the modern world, is notoriously a religious country, given over to the discussion of unprofitable theological speculations and devoted to the useless pursuits of the things of the spirit. All progressive nations have freed themselves from the world of medievalism and religion and direct their concentrated forces to the practical problems of human welfare and well-being. Europe and America have secularized their political, social, educational, and industrial institutions, and have compelled religion to keep itself aloof from politics and secular interests. In contemporary western society the love of country has supplanted zeal for the supernatural, and material prosperity has become far more important than future salvation. Soviet Russia has dashed Christianity to the ground and has made hecatombs of heavenly and earthly czars. The whole system of Russian government and society has been constructed on the principles of Marx, Lenin, and other proponents of the theory of communism and the Christian Bible has been replaced by *Das Kapital* as a source book of human conduct, social and sexual relations, and proletarian morality. China, after a painful humiliation and a grievous loss of national sovereignty, has awakened to world realities and has decided to shed her age-long lethargy, unchanging modes of life, contentment with her hoary past, and ancient traditions. She has fully realized that the future lies with scientific civilization which she must adopt in order to shine forth in redoubled radiance as the wonder and envy of mankind. An educational system based on the secular model has been introduced in the schools and colleges of the Celestial republic and the foreign controlled educational institutions have been obliged to conform to governmental regulations. No longer the

young Chinese rocks his head on Taoist magical formulas and stultifies his mental and physical energies in qualifying himself to answer such silly questions as "how the moonlight sleeps on the lake," but studies useful subjects as science and economics, and learns the doctrines of Sun and international politics. And Turkey by a deliberate exercise of the will and an extraordinary effort, and a national resolve and rapidity for which there is no parallel or analogy has transformed herself from a medieval and theocratic state into a modern and progressive nation.

But India, in spite of catastrophic and revolutionary changes that have taken place all over the world, remains quite unaffected and the least willing to learn or follow the example of other nations. Religion is still her warp and woof and dictates to politics, law, and economics. God is the pivot around whom her whole being revolves like satellites and absorbs all her best thot and sublime aspiration. Those so-called revealed scriptures still furnish her with a philosophy of life and a rule of conduct, and determine her attitude towards the problems of twentieth century ethics and politics. India is hopelessly a religion ridden country more sorely and onerously than was Europe under the cruel domination of Christianity in the Middle Ages. She is cramped in on every side by religion. The condition of her life is such that she shall be an instrument of and shall exist for the sake of a mythical divine personality. Her whole life is sacrificed for the observance of degrading religious ceremonies and dedicated to the service of God or gods. Religion encircles her like the coil of a snake and weighs upon her feeble body and mind with a physical pressure.

The future of India is bound up with religion; it will be the most important factor in the evolution of Indian politics and in the development of Indian public opinion. Indian nationalism of which the world has heard so much of late is simply a religious fanaticism. But before we enter upon the discussion of the relation of religion with the present day Indian problems and make any forecasts about the future of India, we may cast a cursory glance over her past history and visualize clearly the influence which religious beliefs have exercised on her history and civilization. The present day India can only be understood in the light of her past.

The religious development of India may be divided into the fol-

lowing periods. First, Vedism, or the earliest religious beliefs of the Indo-Aryans; second, Brahmanism, or the faith inculcated and taught in the books called Brahmanas, Upanishads, law books of Manu, and numerous other works; third, the rise of Buddhism as a reaction against the sacrificial monstrosity of the priests and against the perversion of Vedic religion; and last Hinduism, or mutilation of Vedism and Brahmanism adulterated with Dravidian fetishism and superstition. It is now the prevalent religion of India.

The primitive Indo-Aryans who invaded India in the period about 4,000 to 1,000 B. C. were a hardy and warlike race. From the very beginning of their entry in the Punjab they found themselves arrayed against the aborigines and waged relentless wars against them. The Rig Veda hymns describe in beautiful language the bloody conflicts between the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned aborigines and relate the details of warfare in those far-off days. The bands of attacking Aryans marched with their leaders carrying banners. The soldiers on the march sang and shouted both of the victories of their generals and of their war gods. The leaders rode on war chariots while the soldiers followed them on foot in bands. The fighting weapons used by both sides were bows, arrows, and darts. The Aryans by their superior power, military spirit, disciplined leadership, valor, and bravery finally overwhelmed their enemies and reduced them to submission. They invaded the large part of the country and drove the aborigines to the hills. They exterminated several original tribes and burned down their villages. The Vedic Aryans lived and died in war and their religion sanctioned and glorified war. With them war was a passion and a profession. Their whole being was saturated in war traditions and was rooted in courage and military virtues.

The religion of the Vedic Aryans was comparatively simple; it was emphatically a natural religion. The elemental forces of nature served as objects of veneration symbolized in a visible phenomena. The early Indo-Aryans were a people gifted with high mental capacities and strong moral feelings. They were endowed with marvellous powers of appreciating the beauties of nature and with a profound consciousness of their kinship with the visible and invisible forces which regulated the order of the world. Their material welfare depended on the influences of the sky, atmosphere,

light, and sun, and to these they turned with deep respect and admiration. Thus Agni was the fire-god, the friend and benefactor of men; Surya the sun-god, the enemy of darkness and bringer of light; Indra the god of rain, the fertilizer of agricultural soil; Rudra the god of the destructive thunderstorm, punisher of the evildoers, but a defender of the virtuous; Soma the god of inebriating juice, destroyer of every form of disease, imparter of bodily strength, and a bestower of health and so on.

The Vedic Aryans addressed their prayers to the gods to extort from them the good things of life: rain, food, cattle, health, wealth, and other boons. They did not invoke the aid of their deities as representatives of a superior being before whom they should bow in sheer awe and repent their sins. The savage idea of sin, fear of a transgression of the law of any heavenly being, and atonement for misconduct never entered into their sublime optimistic nature and never barbarized their philosophic intellect. They looked upon the gods as their comrades and servants who assisted them in their campaigns against their adversaries and showered upon them material prosperity. Their gods feasted with them and shared their joys and difficulties. They were a people thoroughly conscious of their intellectual and physical powers and refused to submit to the claims of any arrogant deity. Their religion was characterized by a passionate love of liberty, utility, materialistic advance, and a Nietzschean sense of power. They were the first people who recognized that man is essentially a material being with ethical and moral wants and that his moral life can only blossom and come to fruition under favorable economic conditions. They were utilitarians, materialists, and self-assertives before Mill, Dewey, Marx, Feurbach, and Nietzsche. They justly called themselves Aryas.

The form of Indo-Aryan worship was also a natural process. To their personified forces of nature they gave characters like their own. They attributed to them human likings, tastes, and predilections, and invested them with human qualities. They propitiated them by praise, accompanying their hymns with such presents and offerings of food and drink as was deemed acceptable among themselves. Rice, clarified butter, and the Soma plant formed their offerings. They had no temples and images; sacrifices were performed in the open air and were not fettered with meaningless rites

and cumbered with demoralizing ceremonies. There were no precincts permanently devoted to worship and no idols before whom they bowed in abject servility. The gods were so closely connected with natural phenomena that no need of any invisible power was felt. Each man satisfied his moral instincts, according to his own conception of the deva or devas on whose favor his prosperity was thot to depend.

Brahmanism was the second stage in the development of religious thot in India. It grew out of Vedism but it drifted far from the original and simple teaching of the Vedas and the primitive mode of worship. In place of Vedic gods of natural phenomena, Brahmanical mythology set up one universal supreme being, the only real entity, from whom all things emanate, like drops from an ocean, like sparks from fire. The natural process of devotion by an intricate ritual and monstrous sacrificial ceremonies. The democratic Vedic organization of society was supplanted by an aristocratic system of society based on caste distinctions. The great Indian law-giver, Manu, formulated the caste system and split Indian society into four rigidly defined divisions. First were the Brahmans, second the Shatris or the warriors, third the Vaishas or the farmers and traders, and fourth the Sudras or the conquered aborigines. On each caste was fixed a definite life-programme and to each was assigned a special mission or avocation in life. The Brahmans were charged with the duty of performing sacrifices for themselves and for others, and of ministering to the spiritual needs of mankind. The Shatris were to cultivate heroic and military virtues in order to defend and protect the other classes from marauders and invaders; the Vaishas were to follow agricultural and industrial pursuits to feed the people; and the Sudras were condemned to engage in menial and servile avocations and to serve the three upper classes. These distinctions were fixed immovably. In the place of natural plasticity and fluidity of a social organism were substituted inflexible and ineluctable moulds which could not be broken. Marriage, social and family relations, industries, vocations, military service, rights of property, laws of inheritance, every interest of human life was regulated by caste rules.

Brahmanism evolved beliefs and elaborated philosophical doctrines which were wholly unknown to the Vedas. The doctrine of Karma and spiritual salvation were quite foreign to the Vedic sages



and exercised a very pernicious influence on the minds of the Indian people. The former held that man is not the author of his actions; but all his actions come from the force and from the necessary concatenation of things. An irresistible fate, good or evil, causes some to be born for good, others for evil. All men are born under the empire of one or the other of these two destinies. The latter despised earthly life and bred a sheer contempt for what savored of flesh. It replaced the worldliness of Vedic Aryans by the other-worldliness, and the love of nature with its grandest operations, by the love of an unknown deity.

As a protest against Brahmanical religious tyranny and corruption Buddhism arose during the fifth century B. C. The great leader and instigator of the Buddhist reaction was Gautama of the Sakya tribe, whose father was the king of the territory round Kapilvastu—a town situated under the mountains of Nepaul about one hundred and fifty miles north of Patna. The Buddha was well qualified by his intellectual attainments and majesty of character to stem the tide of degradation in religion and to restore the simple teaching of his forefathers to its original and pristine purity. Brought up in leisure and royal comforts, endowed by nature with graceful features and sound intellect, gifted with a remarkable power of speech and expression, and well versed in all the philosophical theories of his time the young reformer inaugurated the greatest intellectual and social revolution the world has ever seen or known. With the voice of a prophet Gautama rejected ceremonies, sacrifices, incantations, and the worship of any God or gods as a means to salvation and repudiated the authority of the priest and the infallibility of any revealed scripture.

Salvation was to be attained by right meditation, right belief, right action, right knowledge, and not by the mortification of flesh and divine grace. No traditions, no sacred writings, and no commandments of any supermundane personality were to be respected or accepted unless they satisfied the requirements of human reason and experience. The young Shatri with his indomitable courage repulsed with all the force at his command the old order of ethics which attributed the principles of morality to divine will and curbed the human will by the ordinances of God. The morality of the sky, it was argued, is subversive of all human freedom and an evident obstacle in the moral progress of man. Morality should obtain its

sanctions in human relations, in the complex growth of human needs and aspirations, and not in the injunctions of a mythical divine personality. Man is essentially a moral being and the roots of morality are laid deep down in the lowest forms of organic life.

The Buddha in his social teaching was equally a most uncompromising reformer and dissenter. He denounced the claim of the innate superiority of the Brahman or Shatri over the Sudra and protested against the artificial barriers erected against the lower classes. He proclaimed the equality of the Sudra with the Brahman and eliminated social rigidity and caste discipline. The doors which the Brahmins had slammed against the Sudras were broken down with a crash, the like of which we have not heard in priest-ridden India up to the present day. "*Jarmana jaete Sudra, karmana jaete dāviya*"; that is "by birth every one is a Sudra, it is by action that one becomes a Brahman," became once more a practical reality. "My Dharma is a Dharma of mercy for all," said Buddha, "proclaim it to all men; it is as vast as the spaces of heaven which excludes none." All were welcomed into Buddhist brotherhood without any distinction of race or color and were put on a uniform system of morality and equality. Purity of mind, nobility of character, knowledge and goodness were set up as the criteria of man's worth, and not race or religion. Those who lead moral lives, render useful service to society, help their fellowmen in times of distress and emergency, and cultivate learning for the welfare of mankind should be honored and exalted no matter from what race, caste, creed they may hail. Those who lead dissolute lives, fall into evil temptation, and wallow in the mire of sensuality should be pitied and efforts should be made to extricate them from their moral degradation.

For over a thousand years Buddhism guided and controlled the life and that of the Indian people and affected tremendous changes in the structure of Indian society and polity. The old iniquities in society and incrustations in religion were swept away and a new social system based on the doctrines of equality, liberty, and fraternity was reared and a positive religion founded on secular ethics and rational inquiry was established. The attention of the Indian people was diverted from metaphysical hairsplitting, from that so-called nonsense Brahmvīdyā, and was concentrated on the practical problems of human well-being and the advancement of the kingdom

of man.

Buddhism prepared the way for and furnished the material to India's greatest Emperor and Son Chandra Gupta to construct his political edifice on a firm and solid structure and to make India a nation. It was under his glorious reign that the successor of Alexander the Great, Seleucus Nicator, was driven out of the Punjab and was forced to conclude a humiliating treaty. Nicator was obliged to give the hand of his daughter in marriage to the Indian ruler, was compelled to evacuate Indian territory, and was made to sign all the articles of the Treaty. Chandra Gupta brought the whole of India under his political control and reduced all the incoherent mass of Indian populations, warring factions, petty chiefs, and tribal organizations to one regular and compact political entity. For the first time in Indian history he subjected India to a uniform system of law and government and organized his governmental system on the principles of the great Indian political philosopher and his prime minister the celebrated Kautilya, the author of Artha Shastra. The government of the country was divided into separate departments, such as foreign affairs, army and navy, trade and commerce, agriculture and husbandry, currency and finance, and the function of each was intrusted in the hands of a competent minister. The emperor regarded himself as the servant of the state and a father of his people. He did not arrogate to himself the divine right of kings, like the European despots of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and did not claim to possess an absolute authority over his subjects. He was a constitutional monarch and his rule was based on the patriarchal ideals of government.

Chandra Gupta was followed by his grandson, Maharaj Asoka, one of the greatest and noblest sovereigns of all Indian history. He made Buddhism the state religion of India and exerted zealous efforts to put the teaching of the Prince-Philosopher into actual practice. He planted fruit trees, dug wells, established hospitals for both men and animals, founded charities for the poor and the needy and did his best to banish evil and poverty from his country. He looked upon his subjects as his children and worked with almost a fanatical zeal to ameliorate their social and moral conditions. He certainly succeeded in his sacred mission and left an imperishable record of his achievements. The thing which struck the great Chinese scholar, Hien Tsan, when he visited India was the complete



absence of prostitution, gambling, intoxicating liquors, crime, theft, murder, and other social evils, among the Indian people. Asoka made his country a social paradise and raised it to the height of humanistic civilization.

But it is a prophet of righteousness and internationalism that the great Indian Emperor has earned an undying glory and has become an immortal of history. He despatched missionaries to all parts of the world to communicate the message of spiritual deliverance and intellectual enlightenment discovered by the Buddha under the Bo Tree to all the races of mankind. He did not send missionaries to fetter mankind with dogmas, *ex cathedra* of morals, religious superstitions, but to preach the "Law of Piety"—mercy, truthfulness, goodness, justice, human brotherhood, tolerance, and the like. He did not make religion a pretext for robbing other people of their territory, of depriving them of their place in the sun, and of despoiling them of their riches and privileges. He did not regard the world beyond India as a legitimate field of exploitation and political domination. He aimed at founding a world wide, ideal, human society, in which justice and good will should be realized and all world communities should be brought together in a spirit of harmony and love, on a moral basis. His goal was nothing less than the creation of a new world.

For over a thousand years Buddhism existed as a dominant faith of the Indian people. But, after all, it could not in the end escape the usual fate of deterioration and decline written on every human institution. Its powerful influence began to wane with the lapse of years and the impulse which it had received from the magnetic personality of its great Founder grew fainter. There was no leader to vivify its primitive zeal and no one to step in the place of the Buddha. The later Buddhist teachers such as Nagsena, Buddhaghosha, and others, lost their touch with the common people and gave themselves up to metaphysical wranglings. The old forces which were smouldering beneath the surface of Indian society raised their heads and challenged its right to exist. They had not become extinct, but had simply retreated before its mighty tide. The old inveterate propensities gradually reasserted their sway over men's minds. Sacredotalism, priestcraft, and every form of superstition were too firmly planted on the Indian soil to be completely uprooted. The ponderous and mischievous longing of the Indian heart for

the unseen and its shameful mystical leanings were too powerful to be wholly eradicated. The positive rationalism of Buddhism, its philosophical conception of human salvation and destiny were too abstruse for ordinary people to understand, and its cold blooded postulates were too barren to satisfy their abnormal religious instincts. It finally met with a cruel fate in India and succumbed before the onrushing tide of Brahmanical revival.

After the expulsion of Buddhism two doctrines came to the fore which led India straightforward to ruin and to the destruction of her liberties. The first was the crazy cult of Bhagti analogous to the Christian doctrine of the kingdom of God, that did more than anything else to make India a prey to foreign invasions and contributed most to her downfall. It caused the Indians, as the teaching of "Lay your treasures in heaven" caused the worldly Romans, to forsake this world for the next and to sacrifice earthly existence for the false promise of celestial felicity. The thirst for eternity induced the Indians to tear them away from their family affections and domestic ties, and to dedicate themselves to the search of God. In their erotic passion for immateriality they renounced all the good things of earthly life and withdrew themselves to the jungles. There they imposed upon themselves voluntary vows of poverty and beastly existence, practiced severe penances and fastings, inflicted indescribable cruelties and horrors on their mortal bodies, mortified their flesh, and reduced themselves to mere skeletons.

They held their arm upright for years, until the tissues withered and it became impossible ever again to bring the arm down to a normal position. They took long journeys walking on sharp spikes; sat for years by day and slept by night on a bed of thorns. Many rolled hundreds of miles in sun and storm, thru dust and mud; while others hung for half an hour at a time by the feet, head down, over a smouldering fire, or sat surrounded by five fires, thru the blistering heat of an Indian summerday. Numerous Indians loaded their bodies, and still do, with a heavy chain of iron fastened into the muscles at their back. The savage craving for the ultimate and the universal drove the Indians to mutilate and murder themselves and to destroy themselves from the face of the earth. While the Indians in their acquisition of the infinite were assassinating themselves their country was overrun by the foreign devastators and was put to fire and the sword. There is nothing which has degraded India po-

litically, economically, socially, and morally as God. It has been the bane of Indian life and is responsible for all her past woes. "The idea of God" says Marx, "is the keystone of a perverted civilization," and the truth of the statement is completely borne out by India's corruption and degeneration.

The doctrine of ahimsa or non-killing, preached and inculcated by the founder of Jainism, Mahavira, derided the military virtues and utterly undermined the fighting spirit of the Indian people. His followers have been and are the curse of India and it is they who preserve the lower forms of animal life such as rats and precipitate infectious diseases and bubonic plagues upon the country every year. Tho born a Shatri this mischievous degenerate taught the most degraded form of effiminacy and popularized a cult of decadence and national annihilation. He entirely dehumanized the Indians and reduced them to a sodden inertia and quiescence. The hypothesis of a state of perpetual peace in the human race and mercy with every sentient existence was the hypothesis of absolute immobility and sheer debility. The Vedic hymns, the ethics of the Gita, the doctrines of the sages of Maha-Bharata and Ramayana all had taught and glorified war and had regarded it as the mother of all heroic virtues and manly civilization. But this prophet of non-killing and peace discarded primitive Aryan traditions of courage, love of war, and devotion to the cultivation of heroic virtues and erected on their place his own cult of feebleness, meekness, and mercy. He bears the same relation to India as Christ does to Rome. Just as the Romans were enervated and ruined by the demoralizing teaching of the sermon on the mount and turning the other cheek so the Indians were crippled and paralysed by the degrading cult of ahimsa and non-injury.

Thus the damnable prescriptions of bhagti and ahimsa brought down India from a high pedestal and a position of eminence to that of subjection and helotage, and exposed her to the incursions of barbarian freebooters. Her primitive buoyancy of heroic action and the principles of her Shatri morality were eclipsed, and her positive and martial virtues were entirely annihilated. She gave up, as her lover Nietzsche would say, her master morality and adopted in its place slavish morality. In her active life she followed the ethics of the Christian gospel rather than that of the Gita while Europe guided her affairs by the political philosophy of Manu and

the war teachings of Mahabharata sages. And for this criminality she has paid and is still paying the price. Her history after the forsaking of her traditions is a record of wars and rebellions, crimes and catastrophes, bloodshed and murder, and of economic spoilation and political slavery. The wild tribes who poured from the north into her territory carried fire and sword wherever they went. She became to them what carrion crow is to the vulture. They razed to the ground blooming cities, magnificent and gorgeous buildings, desecrated beautiful temples, and trampled under their mailed feet all the works of art and the refinements of civilization. The white plunderers who came from the west swept India like a flight of devouring locust and enacted bloody scenes on her sacred soil. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the English fought sanguinary battles for supremacy and converted her into a veritable pandemonium of bloodshed and misery. She finally passed, and deserved to pass, under the cruel yoke of the British and is now reeling under imperialistic domination. She wrote her own death sentence when she adopted the saint as her ideal man in place of the soldier and made that so-called damnation Brahmyvidya (literally the knowledge or search of God) the alpha and omega of her life instead of Raj Niti or the science of government and organization.

If religion is responsible, as we have seen, for the destruction of India's civilization and national freedom, it is at present the sole bar to Indian unity and progress. It is the canker at the root poisoning and stunting the healthy growth of Indian society and patriotism. It divides family from family, class from class, and community from community, and keeps alive communal jealousies, racial antipathies, and caste distinctions. It stratifies Indian society into water-tight compartments and demarcates the Indian peoples into innumerable divisions and gradations. All sorts of religious barbarisms are running riot in unhappy India and there is no superstition invented by human imagination, ignorance, psychological illusion, or weakness that does not claim its votaries among Indian populations. The followers of each religion have their own peculiar observances, their own rules as to food and clothing, their own clubs, their own theory of life, and their own special occupations. Any intermingling of the members of different religions by intermarriage or even by intimate social intercourse, is out of the question, and is absolutely prohibited. In western lands meals, eating, drink-

ing, and numerous other amenities of social life serve to promote mutual sympathy, friendly feeling, genuine liking among different layers of social organism and tend to draw all the members of society into a harmonious and workable blending and fusion, and co-operative goodwill. In India it is a horror for a Brahman to sit at the same table with his Mohammedan countryman and to participate in his social functions. He looks upon him as a disgusting animal, a food-eating barbarian and brands him with the stigma of melesha, a savage. A Sikh nobleman will never accept the hospitality of his Christian countryman and will not even suffer to take a glass of water from his hands tho he may be dying of thirst. Religion encloses the Indians as if in a magic circle outside of which they dare not step and checks the growth of society on democratic principles.

India, as she is at present, is a continent rather than a country—a congeries of nation races, and not a nation. She is a vast international system, embracing nationalities, languages, and religions. All the elements of nationality such as common historical traditions, universal languages, common ideas, and above all, the spirit of patriotism are conspicuously absent. There is practically no patriotic feeling among the vast majority of the Indian people and no nationalistic fervor. An average Indian is devoted more to his fantastic superstitions than to his country. To the Hindu his god Vishnu, to the Mohammedan his Allah, to the Sikh his Wahguru, to the Parsi his Ahurmazda are far more important than India and its interests. A Hindu will forego all material comforts, will sacrifice his means, and will even depart with his life for the sake of his cow religion, and will stand before his idols in a temple in abject servility from morning till night. A Mohammedan will give away all his scanty money, tho he and his family may be dying of starvation, to the cause of Islam and will gladly suffer death over a religious trifle. But ask any average Hindu or Mohammedan to do something for the country which has given him birth and he will turn a deaf ear to your request. He will not contribute anything for a national cause and will not pay any attention to the appeal of nationalist orators. The words patriotism and national sovereignty are meaningless terms to him and do not strike any responsive chord in his breast. The western man regrets that he has only one life to give to his country; the Indian regrets that he has only one life to sacrifice for his religion. Patriotism does not exist in India and will not



take root until religious emotion is excised out of its moral constitution.

It is not only the ignorant and superstitious masses who are swayed by their theological outlook and lack any enthusiasm for a patriotic cause; the educated classes are equally destitute of the spirit of patriotism and are guilty of subordinating the interests of nationhood and the country to their individual and group interests. They never transcend the boundaries of race and religion, and are committed to the advancement of interests of their particular province and community, but never of India as a whole. That so-called Mahatma Gandhi has frankly told that he is Hindu first and Indian afterwards and that cow is to him more dear than India. He openly proclaims that he will not accept Russian aid, if it were offered, to free India, not because the Russians are insincere and selfish, but because they are atheists and hostile to religion. Gandhi loves more his God and future salvation and is infinitely more selfish than a servile Indian in the employment of foreign administration. The Moslem Ali brothers have declared more than once that they are Islamists first and Indians by necessity and that they owe allegiance to the country of their faith, Arabia, and not to India. They want to establish a Moslem raj, and not an Indian raj, based on the Koranic conception of law and government and controlled in the interests of their co-religionists. The English educated Sikhs are equally sectarian and clamor for separate communal representation. The founder of their nationality intended them to be patriots from the first to the last and to lay down at the altar of the Motherland what they hold most dear in life. But they have ignored Lord Govind Singh's commands and have practically degenerated to the level of other Indian communities in patriotism. There are Hindu and Moslem patriots, Sikh and Parsi patriots, but no Indian patriots. There is not a single Indian leader, with the sole exception of Jawahar Lall Nehru, who can be called a sincere patriot.

At present Hindus and the Mohammedans are engaged in a suicidal struggle and a relentless warfare. In the last four or five years there have been many physical clashes between the two communities over religious differences such as the playing of music before the mosque by the Hindus and the killing of the cow by the Moslems, resulting in much bloodshed and riots, and loss of life and property. The tension between the two is becoming more in-

tense than ever before in Indian history and there is no prospect of the speedy demise of the demon of communal bitterness. The hatred of the Hindu and the Moslem is deeply rooted in religion, in tradition, in history and in outlook on life, and will not cease to exist in the near future. It is not the creation of yesterday and will not pass away tomorrow. There are towns and districts in India where the two religions face each other like armies on a battlefield, and where the slightest provocation given by one side or the other ignites pent-up hatreds and ushers in furious carnage and bloody human destruction. A cow slaughtered in the Hindu quarter, and a dead pig thrown into the mosque is enough to fan the flames and to incite the two communities to fall at each other's throats. Cow is sacred to the Hindu and its protection is enjoined upon him by his sacred books. The Hindu will not eat beef and tolerate beef eating because cow is always pure and divine; the Mohammedan will not eat bacon because to him it is always unclean and impure, and strictly prohibited by the injunctions of the Koran. The Hindus cannot assimilate and fuse with the cow slayers and cannot admit them into their personal and social relations. Beef and bacon do not mix, and will not mix until there is a radical change in the mentality of both.

The cleavage between the two communities condemns India to bear the brunt of British domination and compels her to resign submissively to the will of her foreign rulers. British imperialism in India does not rest on sword or the consent of the governed, as wrongly supposed by many, but on religion. India has been brought under English imperial sway by religion and is kept down under subjection by it. Were religion to disappear miraculously from India today British rule would pass away tomorrow. No machine guns, no efficient instruments of human destruction of latest invention, no resources of materialistic science, no political acumen, and no subtle diplomacy can ever hope to keep three hundred million people in bondage if they resolve to throw away imperialistic despotism. Were Indians to withdraw their cooperation and boycott everything British the whole machinery of government would collapse like a house of cards and would come to a sudden end. But India is torn with religious dissensions and cannot make any combination against her exploiters. The British have become past masters by their long acquaintance with the country and its people in the method of divide and rule. Their two big wives, Hindu and

the Mohammedan, are always jealous and suspicious of each other and cannot form an alliance against and cannot bridle the evil propensities of their lord. As long as there is religious difference between the two communities the position of the British as paramount dictators is secure and there is nothing which can dislodge them from their aristocratic authority.

The British recognize this fact more than the Indians. They are very careful of preserving religious animosities and superstitions among the Indian people in order to keep them immune from the infection of foreign ideas and to make them amenable to their rule. At present British bureaucracy is devising the most sinister methods to check the advancing tide of nationalism and secularism and to throw back Indian freedom by a century. Last year a bill was introduced in the Indian legislative assembly known as the public safety bill by British officialdom to shield the faiths of India from the onslaughts of Bolshevism and to deport from the country all communistic agitators. A proposal has just been made to thrust religion in all schools and colleges and to ram the throats of innocent Indian students with the principles of theism. The most mischievous propaganda is carried on in favor of religious education with the help of Christian missionaries, and with the religiously inclined Indians whose interests are identical with the British and whose very existence depends upon the religious superstitions of the people. Liberal grants are given in-aid to all communal institutions out of the public revenue. The sectarian schools, whether they are Hindu, Moslem, Sikh, or Christian, are the hotbeds of unscientific, unhistorical, and unphilosophical education, and are the centers of perpetuating class rivalries, and national and religious antipathies. They fasten upon the minds of poor students barbarous physics, barbarous astronomy, and barbarous history, and stuff them with antipatriotic ideas and tendencies. The puranic, the Koranic, the Granthic, and the Biblical interpretation of the universe and the cosmos is just the one and the same thing; it simply differs in detail. The religious pedagogical institutions are the greatest menace to the intellectual development of the Indian youth and the most dangerous enemies of the creation of a united Indian nation.

What India needs most is not a religious education, but a thoroughgoing secular education with universal and compulsory military training based on the French pattern. She does not need saints,

mahatmas, and theologians, but agricultural chemists, mining engineers, students of hygiene, and political economists, who shall help to develop the material resources and further the industrialization of the country. She is already too much cursed with mystics and dreamers who are a notorious burden on the people. India wants a government that shall put an end to all communal schools, that shall do away with all economic and social inequalities, that shall abolish priesthood and confiscate all property allotted to monastic institutions. The Hindu temples, the Moslem mosques, and the Sikh Gurdwaras are the dens of vice and frightful immorality and the priests of the Indian religions as a class are the most immoral, the most vicious, and the most contemptible specimens among humanity extant. They are a thousand times more rapacious, cruel, and sensual than were the Catholic clergy before the storm of Protestant upheaval burst upon Europe. They are Rasputin thru and thru. They live in magnificent buildings with their hawks and hounds and with their splendid retinue of beautiful female concubines. These parasites and drones feed upon the produce of Indian peasants and workingmen and exploit them by their threats of excommunication and hell and by their promises of heaven and salvation. They eat, drink, and beget, and pass their days in ignoble revelry and in aimless sloth. They are pervaded by profound moral corruption and are enmeshed in sensuality and the lust of the flesh. They are like a barren fig tree fit only to be cast into the hell-fire.

To sum up, the path of India is beset with enormous difficulties and is strewn with almost insurmountable obstacles. The gulf between the Hindu and the Mohammedan will persist for a considerable period of time and will not be easily bridged over. As long as there is religion India's fate is sealed and there can be no true social, political, educational, and industrial regeneration of the Indian people. The sun might begin to rise in the west and set in the east but to say that India will emerge as a united and dominant nation and will take an honored place appropriate to her size and population without complete elimination of religion, in the comity of nations is a dream and by no means a sensible dream. It is utterly unthinkable and impossible. It must not, of course, be supposed that religion will continue to condemn India to an effete epoch and to subserviency to the foreigner. It is liable to go down before the new forces that

are convulsing Asia and shaking India to the center. The impact of modern civilization is pressing upon the old and conservative Indian world order with irresistible fury and is bursting asunder the firm joints of caste and ancient moorings. The new ideas are a dynamite that batters down the steel ramparts of religious obscurantism and shivers the thick ice of invetrate custom and tradition. Nor must it be forgotten that the process of evolution involves the dissolution of primitive beliefs and that the advance of society on industrial lines implies the disintegration of religion. The crusade of Russia, China and Turkey against this colossal Asiatic barbarism will exercise a tremendous influence on the Indian situation and will prepare the peoples to adopt a hostile attitude towards religion. In India itself conditions are arising which make for sudden change, for distrust against established social regime, and for a wide-spread intellectual and spiritual unrest. India indeed is standing unheeding, as France stood in the second-half of the eighteenth century, on the brink of a crater which is destined to change profoundly by its eruption the whole course of her historical development and civilization. And when that explosion occurs it will be the most glorious day in the history of India and the East.